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DECORATIVE ART IN LONDON.

BY HENRY B. WHEATLEY.

THE chief talk in London just now is about the Fisheries Exhibition at South Kensington. Why the general public should suddenly feel a violent interest in Fish and Fisheries is not very apparent. But the fact is that no previous Exhibition has ever been so well managed as this is, and as a consequence people are flocking to it, and what is more they come away thoroughly satisfied. The arrangements for electric lighting are excellent and doubtless the Exhibition looks better at night than in the day. The royal pavilion which consists of several rooms arranged for the convenience of the Prince and Princess of Wales has been designed and the furniture supplied by Messrs. Gillow & Son. A special feature of the decoration consists in the exhibition of tapestries from the Royal Tapestry Works at Windsor. These comprise a view of Windsor Castle from the river Thames, a life-size figure of a *Moyen-age* sportsman in the act of letting slip his hawk, by the late E. M. Ward, R.A., a small panel representing a group of fish by J. E. Hodgson, a pastoral scene with sheep and two large medieval hunting scenes, also by Mr. Ward. These Tapestry Works were established under the auspices of the Duke of Edinburgh about seven years ago, and as the place is not intended as a commercial speculation, improvements in the building, etc., are made out of the profits. All the workmen, with the exception of four English apprentices, are French. Besides the new work which is produced here old tapestry is renovated, and this is a very useful branch of the operations at this well managed establishment. The pavilion ceilings are paneled in oak, and filled in with gold embossed paper *en suite* with the walls.

Much attention is now paid to tapestry, which has come very much into use. An exhibition of painted tapestries by French artists has been open in New Bond Street for a week or so, and many of the objects are greatly to be commended for their good taste and elegance.

It was an excellent idea of Messrs. Jackson and Graham to arrange a series of rooms furnished and decorated throughout in the best possible manner, and they have carried out the idea thoroughly well. About a week ago I went to the private view, and was conducted over the vast establishment by one of the obliging department managers. The dining room furniture is carried out in accordance with the designs of Mr. Robert W. Edis, F.S.A. The decoration consists of a paneled ceiling of inexpensive construction, and a deep hand-painted frieze, which is supported by a red and gold Oriental paper, and the woodwork of the room is an Indian red with enrichments of a darker color. The floor is covered by an Indian carpet, with a surrounding of Indian matting. The chimney piece, sideboard, side tables, centre table and chairs are of oak delicately carved. The table was arranged for desert with the flowers and ornaments placed on the bare wood, and white damask slips down the sides of the table. One of Dr. Salviati's Venetian glass chandeliers hanging from

the ceiling, lighted the table. The drawing room is decorated with a light dado of enameled white woodwork, the walls being hung with a rich amber colored flock paper. Above this is a hand-painted frieze of lighter color, and the cornice and ceiling are lighter still. The curtains are of copper colored stamped velvet, and the chairs are covered with an old pattern brocade on a rich blue ground. The floor is covered with Indian matting, on which are placed fine Persian rugs. The carving of the woodwork is in low relief, and well treated, the chimney piece being specially successful. The smoking room is decorated with a red paper and high gold dado with black woodwork. The furniture is of walnut wood covered with crocodile skin, and the floor is covered by a Turkey carpet and a surrounding of floorecloth. The bedrooms

museums. The carving is very fine, and the design of pure Renaissance, dated about 1680. Each panel of the doors is carved in high relief, and the dado is paneled in solid oak, inlaid with light in dark and dark in light, alternately.

Wall decoration is daily becoming more general, and we seldom see the cold plain walls that once were so prevalent. The hall of the Bakers Company has just been ornamented with a series of historical panels, from the cartoons by Mr. F. Weekes. The subjects are as follows:—I. King Henry II. granting the charter to the Company. II. Building of First Livery Hall. III. Investiture of the Livery. IV. The Company's barge on the Thames. V. The ancient ovens, with bakers at work. VI. Assay of bread at Mansion House. VII. The dole and almsgiving of the Company. VIII.

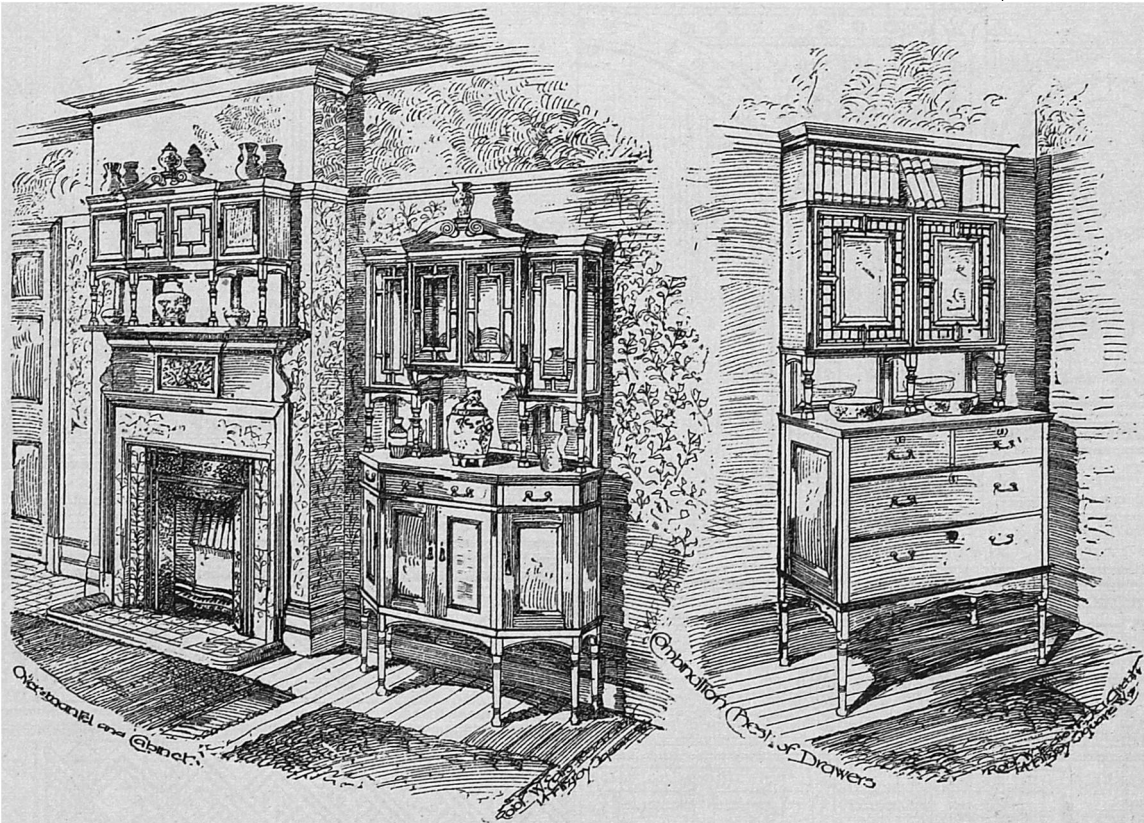
Lord Mayor's procession on horseback, with master and wardens of the Company.

A French writer once said that England is the sepulchre of art, because, like the gates of death, it never gives up what has once passed its borders. The constant sales of grand collections of works of art, however, give foreigners an opportunity of getting back some of these things. Another famous collection has just passed under the hammer, Messrs. Christie, Manson & Woods, sold the Limoges enamels belonging to the Duke of Marlborough, which realised a total of £8,226; but several of the lots are believed to have been bought in. A large oval dish, richly ornamented by Jean Court, sold for 1,040 guineas; another dish, by Pierre Raymond, 1577, sold for £945; and a ewer, by Susanne Court (made up at a later date), fetched £945 also. The last lot of the sale was a beautiful little work table of Marie Antoinette, with plaques of Sèvres porcelain, mounted in ormolu. This lot was put up by the auctioneer at £6,000, and withdrawn as there was no higher bid.

The making of lace was not introduced into Ireland until 1820, but since then that country has become famous for the manufacture. An exhibition of Irish lace is now open in the Egyptian Hall of the Mansion House, with the object of encouraging the manufacture, which has not yet grown to be a commercial success. Much of the lace is an excellent imitation of recognized standard styles, such as Venetian point, Spanish point, &c.; but there are also specimens which possess more an original character.

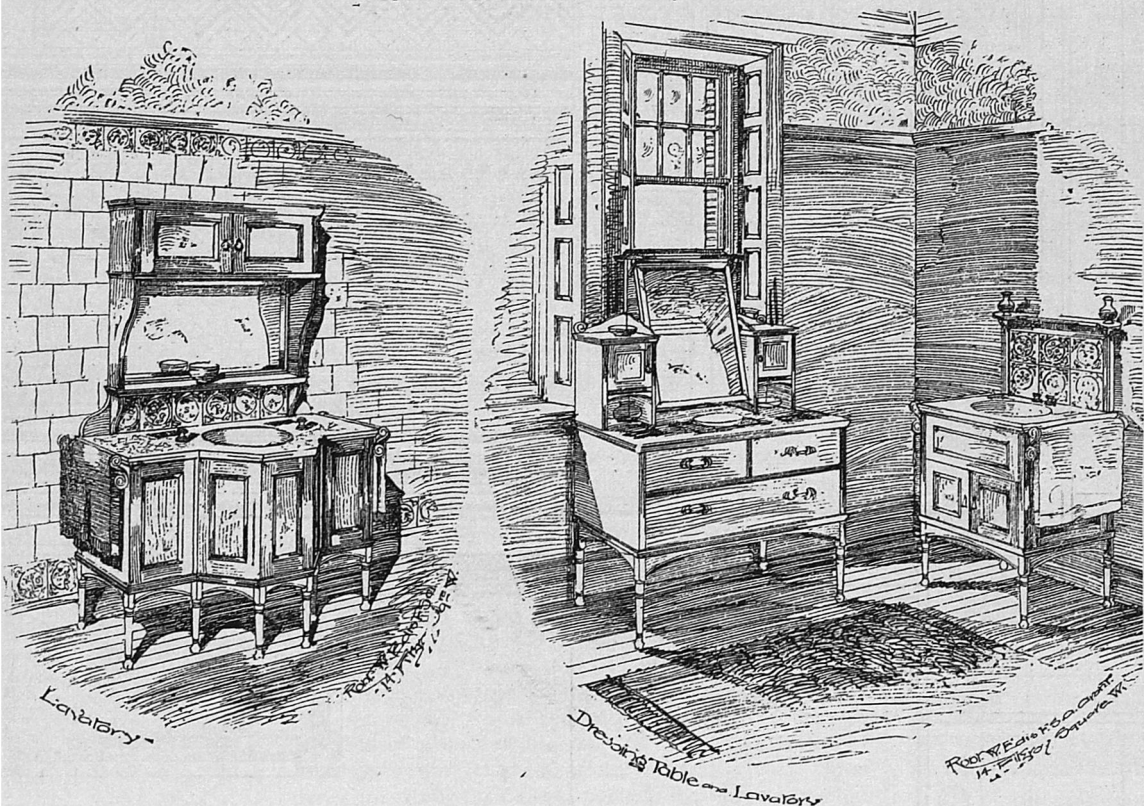
The announcement of the sale of Strawberry Hill, takes us back, in imagination, to the times of the most entertaining

of letter writers and the first of artistic furnishers. After Horace Walpole's death, his unique collections were sold, but the house which held them still remained as an interesting relic of a remarkable man. Architects soon learnt sufficient to enable them to improve upon what came to be known as Strawberry Hill Gothic; but the place itself has an historic interest, and it would be a sad pity if the house was pulled down to make way for a number of pretentious villas. Walpole expended £55,000 upon the building, and the late Countess of Waldegrave laid out between £80,000 and £100,000 on a new wing and other additions. Yet, when brought to the hammer lately, the highest bid was £25,000, or merely the value of the ground for building purposes. As this was less than the reserve price, the lot was withdrawn.



FURNITURE AT THE JOCKEY CLUB NEWMARKET FOR THE PRINCE OF WALES

[THE BUILDING NEWS.]

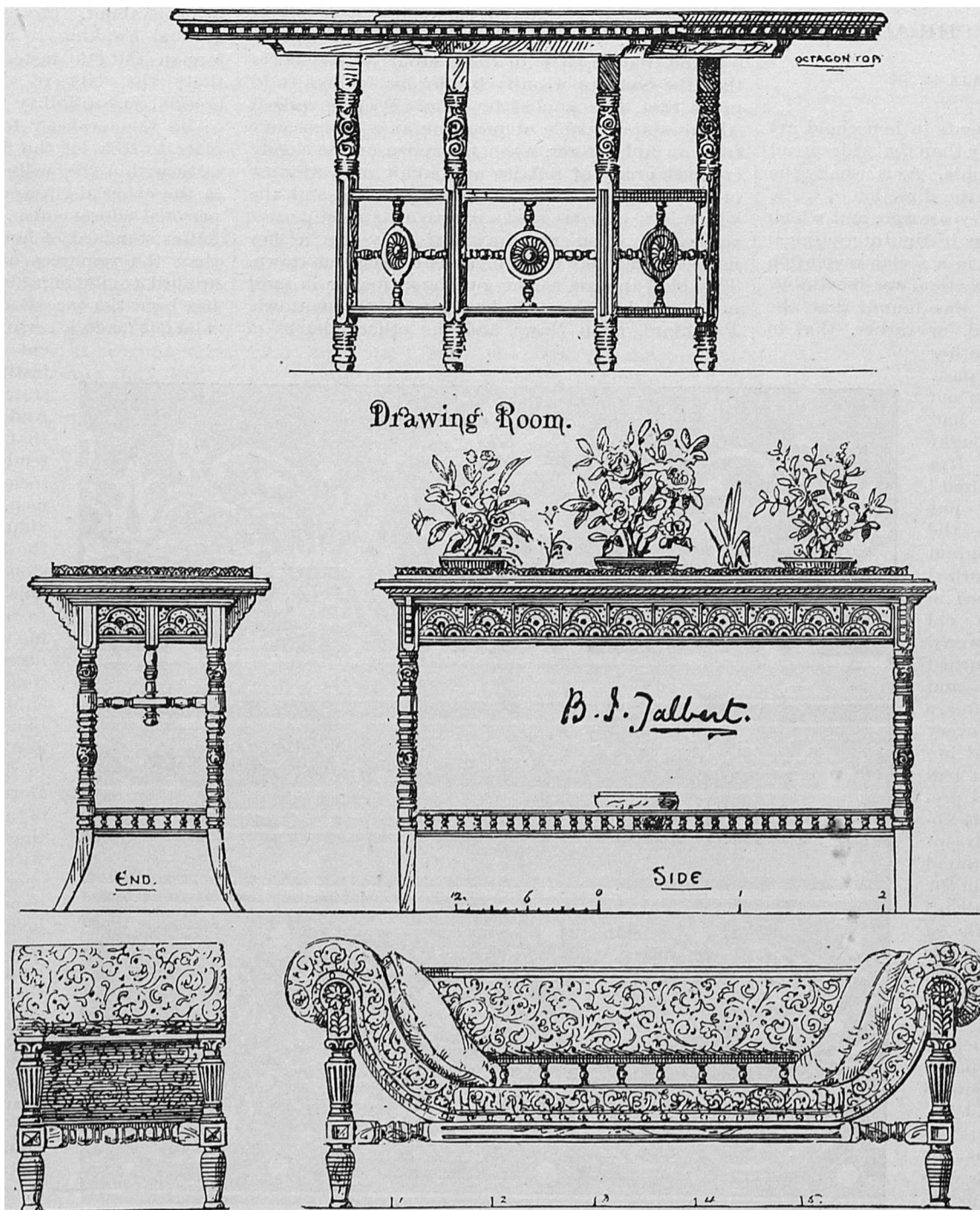


are fitted up respectively with enameled white painted furniture, basswood, stained pine and American walnut. The arrangement of this furniture is specially designed to avoid dust traps, and to utilize space to the best advantage. With this object in view the wardrobes have been carried up to the ceiling, affording storage for winter clothes in summer and for summer things in winter. The washing and bath appliances are concealed by well contrived alcoves screened off by curtains. The taste displayed in these bedrooms and boudoirs is considerable, and the arrangements are most cheerful and appropriate.

Two fine doors and one hundred and fifty feet of dado, from an ancient castle in the south of Europe, are now in London, and it is to be hoped they may be secured for one of our national

It is possible to look upon the destruction of Baron Grant's Kensington Home with more complacency, for there seems to be reason for believing that the homes built upon the site will be an improvement upon the mansion, for which so many houses were cleared away. The grounds extend over seven acres, and Mr. Carr, of Bedford Park fame, with Mr. J. J. Stevenson, as architect, have laid them out for building on a uniform plan. The houses are to have red brick fronts with terra cotta dressings and roofs of red tiles, the drawings of the elevation are very effective. Purchasers of freeholds are allowed to have their own architects, so that their designs are in general harmony with the complete scheme. In the plan it is arranged that subways shall be placed under all the roads, so as to obviate the great evil of constantly tearing up the paving for the convenience of gas and water companies.

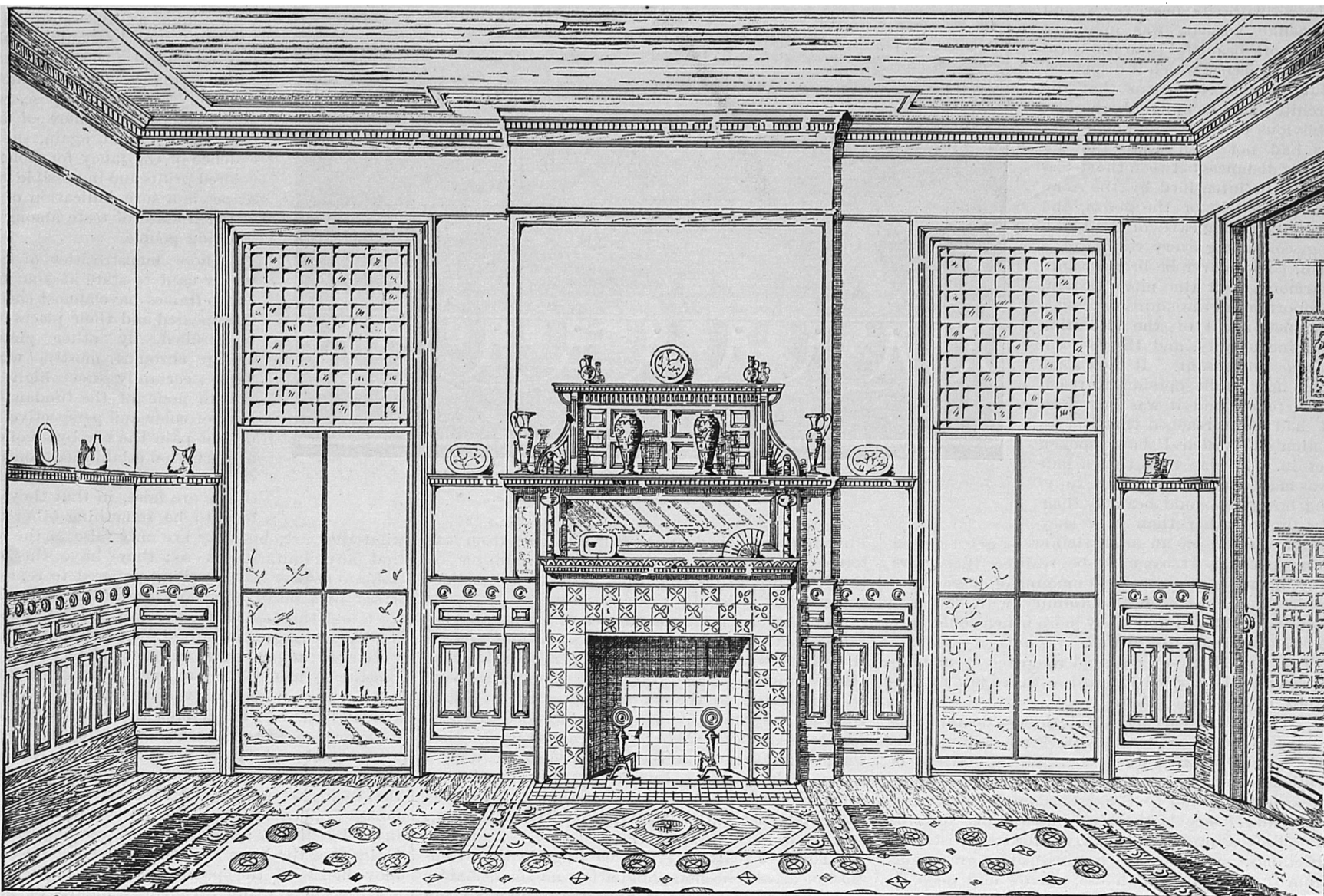
I alluded in my last letter to the attempt of some ladies to improve the form of the clothing of their sex, and now it appears that men's clothes are also to be improved. Hygienic dress formed one of the sections of the Exhibition of the National Health Society at Knightsbridge, but in spite of all the preaching, fashion goes on regardless of comfort and convenience.



EXAMPLES OF DRAWING ROOM FURNITURE. BY B. J. TALBERT.

Mr. E. C. Robins delivered a valuable address lately at the Parkes Museum on Modern Hospital Construction, in which he gave particulars of the plans of most of the chief modern hospitals and infirmaries in England and abroad that are built on the separate pavilion system. Mr. Robins quoted from Miss Nightingale some particulars as to what hospitals were in the last century, thus the Hotel Dieu contained 1,200 beds, but from two to five thousand, even seven thousand sick were crowded into the hospital at one time; the consequence of this fearful overcrowding was that one out of every four patients used to die. So late as the year 1788, each of the beds in the Hotel Dieu was intended to hold two or four sick persons.

In concluding this letter, I may refer to Mr. L. Foreman Day's lecture on Common Sense House Decoration, in which he showed the danger of Fashion setting up foolish ideals. This is an evil we should all be prepared for. Doubtless, there is much of mere fashion in the present revival of taste, and there are signs that the tide is beginning to turn towards certain styles that have been the most loudly denounced. It should be the aim of those interested in art progress to do all they can to put the popular taste on such a basis that bad models may not be returned to. For this purpose we cannot give better advice than this—Educate your eye and trust to common sense.



DINING ROOM IN SPANISH MAHOGANY. BY T. A. ROBERTS, ARCHITECT, NEWARK, N.J.